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A984Pro
United States Department of Agriculture
Subcommittee for Human Nutrition

Program Aid 1480

Human Nutrition Research and Education in USDA



Since 1984, the Subcommittee for Human Nutrition has coordinated human nutrition research and education activities in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The subcommittee is part of USDA's Research and Education Committee, which operates under the Secretary of Agriculture's Policy and Coordinating Council. Annually, the Secretary submits a report to Congress on the Department's human nutrition research and education activities. This report is developed by the Subcommittee for Human Nutrition.

Human nutrition research in USDA seeks to improve the understanding of the nutritive value of foods, human nutritional needs, the kinds and amounts of food that Americans consume relative to their needs, and strategies for improving diets and the food supply.

A major educational role of USDA is to help consumers understand the relationship of food and its nutrients to health and prevention of diet-related disorders at all stages of life. Educational programs and materials on nutrition, diet, and health are an important part of this role. USDA also coordinates Federal dietary guidance policy through the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The Subcommittee's Dietary Guidance Working Group reviews all departmental materials that deal with dietary guidance.

Following are summaries of each concerned USDA agency's human nutrition research and education activities:



Agricultural Marketing Service

Develops quality grade standards for foods to help buyers and sellers accurately communicate about variations in the quality of these products.

Purchases non-price-supported commodities for distribution to schools and other outlets.

Inspects plants that process eggs to ensure that the finished products are wholesome, unadulterated, and properly labeled.

Provides microbiological and chemical tests of food and collects data about pesticide residues on fresh fruits and vegetables.

Oversees food-related research and promotion programs that are authorized by the Federal Govern-

ment and financed by industry and reviews nutrition plans and projects for these programs.

Conducts research to help the wholesale food marketing system develop facilities and procedures to handle a growing volume and variety of products while maintaining quality and containing marketing costs.

Contact: Director, Information (202) 447-8998



Agricultural Research Service

Conducts research directed toward national problems at five Human Nutrition Research Centers (HNRC)—Beltsville HNRC; Grand Forks HNRC; HNRC on Aging, Tufts; Childrens NRC, Baylor; and Western HNRC, San Francisco—and at regional laboratories.

Devises methods for measuring the composition and nutritive value of foods.

Determines nutritional needs of healthy people throughout life, with emphasis on pregnant and lactating women, and infants, children, and the elderly.

Develops dietary strategies that can prevent or delay onset of chronic diseases.

Defines the functional roles of trace minerals and other essential nutrients.

Devises improved methods for defining marginal nutritional status.

Identifies ways to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply.

Contact: Jacqueline Dupont (301) 344-3216



Cooperative State Research Service

Office of Higher Education Programs

Carries out activities to strengthen U.S. college and university teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences and to ensure graduates with scientific and professional expertise in the food and agricultural sciences.

Conducts the following competitive grant programs that support human nutrition and food science:

Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowships Program provides outstanding scholars with 3 years of training for a doctoral degree and 2 years for a master's degree in areas of the food

and agricultural sciences identified as having national shortages of expertise.

Higher Education Challenge Grants Program enables colleges and universities to provide the quality of education necessary to produce graduates capable of strengthening the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional work force in targeted areas.

1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants

Program sponsors teaching and research projects in high-priority areas to advance the capacities of the seventeen 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University.

Contact: K. Jane Coulter (202) 447-7854

Natural Resources, Food and Social Services

Administers and coordinates funds appropriated for research on food and agricultural issues, including human nutrition research. Matching funds, often more than the Federal funds, are provided by the States.

Contact: Melvin M. Mathias (202) 401-4510

National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program

• Awards competitive grants to support creative basic research in human nutrition with emphasis on determining nutrient requirements.

Contact: Janet Baltzell (202) 401-5178

Small Business Innovation Research Program

Awards research grants to small business firms in selected areas of research including food science and human nutrition to stimulate technological innovation in the private sector. In addition, these grants are awarded to strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting Federal research and development needs and increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research.

Contact: Charles Cleland (202) 401-6852



Economic Research Service

Conducts research on the effect of consumer awareness and knowledge about diet-health links to fat consumption and dietary sources of fat.

Contact: Dan Putler (202) 219-0862 or
Betsy Frazao (202) 219-0864

Conducts research on the effectiveness of generic dairy advertising.

Contact: Jim Blaylock (202) 219-0862

Annually calculates the amount of food available for human consumption in the United States.

Contact: Judy Jones Putnam (202) 219-0870

Prepares annual statistics of expenditures for food.

Contact: Alden Manchester (202) 219-0880

Periodically prepares and publishes cross-tabulations of food spending patterns in households by selected sociodemographic factors and food categories.

Contact: Noel Blisard (202) 219-0862

Forecasts the Consumer Price Index for food.

Contact: Ralph Parlett (202) 219-0870

Conducts research on policy implications of domestic food assistance programs.

Contact: Bill Levedahl (202) 219-0864

Conducts research to quantify the factors that determine food consumption patterns in American households.

Contact: Dave Smallwood (202) 219-0864 or Jim Blaylock (202) 219-0862



Extension Service **Home Economics and Human** **Nutrition**

Provides national leadership for the Cooperative Extension System's nutrition, diet, and health programs that assist individuals and families in choosing foods that meet their nutritional needs.

Administers and manages the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. This program is targeted to low-income families and youth. Through teaching, the program helps them acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary to improve their diet and to contribute to their personal development.

Provides national direction to conduct the Food Safety and Quality Initiative, which develops and supports food safety and quality programs and

improves systems for the transfer of information on the subject.

Contact: Elizabeth Tuckermanty (202) 720-5578



Food and Nutrition Service

Administers domestic food and nutrition assistance to eligible clients in schools and charitable institutions, as well as individuals and households, through such programs as the—

- Food Stamp Program
- National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs
- Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Special Milk Program
- Commodity Programs for Soup Kitchens, Food Banks, and Charitable Institutions
- Nutrition Education and Training Program

Conducts research and evaluation of food and nutrition assistance programs and the clients served by them.

Develops and disseminates program-related nutrition and food information to program cooperators and clients, other government staffs, and the public.

Contact: Director of Information (703) 756-3276



Food Safety and Inspection Service

Food Ingredient Assessment Division, Regulatory Programs

Provides analytical, consultative, and planning services for food ingredients, nutrition, and product safety.

Manages monitoring programs that assess ingredients and nutrients in meat and poultry products.

Coordinates the formulation of agency nutrition policy.

Serves as the agency's source of information on food science and nutrition-related topics.

Develops and interprets regulatory and nonregulatory policy for health messages and nutrition claims on labels and prepares the necessary documents for issuing such requirements.

Recommends research in nutrition and food science and oversees such research.

Recommends regulations, bulletins, and other documents to implement agency standards relating to nutritional requirements for various products.

Contact: C.R. Edwards (202) 447-7680 or
L.P. Posati (202) 447-7680

Standards and Labeling Division, Regulatory Programs

Approves and audits all labels that are used on federally inspected meat and poultry products.

Conducts reviews to ensure that meat and poultry products are formulated with safe and suitable ingredients and that their labels are truthful and not misleading and show all required information.

Develops formal product standards for specifying meat content and for usual ingredients of meat and poultry products.

Develops food labeling regulations and rules on use of various food additives.

Provides support and advice relating to Codex Alimentarius.

Contact: A.L. Clemons (202) 447-6042 or
Jesse Majkowsji (202) 447-4293



National Agricultural Library Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC)

Serves people seeking food and nutrition information or educational materials and includes the following:

—*Reference service.* Nutritionists will perform computer searches, answer food and nutrition questions, and assist with locating specific materials.

—*Lending library.* All items in the FNIC collection may be borrowed by interested persons through either interlibrary loan or direct borrowing.

—**Publications.** Quick Bibliographies, Special Reference Briefs, Nutri-Topics (new title for Pathfinders), and other bibliographies or factsheets are prepared by staff nutritionists.

Acquires books, journal articles, and audiovisual materials pertaining to human nutrition, food service management, and food science for inclusion in the FNIC collection.

Maintains a demonstration center for an extensive collection of food and nutrition microcomputer software on dietary analysis, nutrition education, and food service programs. (Software is not lent.)

Contact: Sandy Facinoli (301) 344-3719



Human Nutrition Information Service

Assembles information on the nutrient composition of foods into the National Nutrient Data Base.

Monitors food and nutrient content of the American diet at three levels—U.S. food supply, food used by households, and food eaten by individuals.

Assesses the dietary status of Americans and the factors that influence that status, including assessments of knowledge and attitudes towards diet and health.

Conducts research to establish the principles of dietary guidance.

Develops research-based dietary guidance materials.

Contact: Johna Pierce (301) 436-8617



Office of the Consumer Advisor

Advises USDA policymakers of consumers' preferences and needs in all areas of nutrition policy, from guidelines to labeling.

Provides information to consumers about USDA's nutrition programs and policy.

Provides the consumer's point of view to farmers and the food industry.

Contact: Ann Chadwick (202) 720-3975

The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, age, handicap, sex or national origin, and is an equal opportunity employer.

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